

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-3 (Canceled).

4. (New) A tool for piercing nuts that does not require spacers or shims comprising a plurality of punch parts and a plurality of corresponding die parts, a piercing nut feeder incorporated into at least one of said punch parts, and a press; each of said punch parts including a piercing nut holder; said piercing nut feeder designed to feed a piercing nut into at least one of said piercing nut holders; each of said piercing nuts designed to punch a hole into and be attached to a metal sheet that is inserted between at least one of said punch parts and at least one of said die parts; said press designed to cause a plurality of said punch parts to be pressed against said die part and to cause said piercing nut to punch a hole into and be attached to a metal sheet that is inserted between said punch part and said corresponding die part, said press including a plurality of gas springs, each of said gas springs including a cylinder and a piston that is designed to at least partially move within said cylinder, each of said pistons designed to engage one of said punch parts and to cause said punch part to move toward said die part, each of said cylinders designed to receive a gas at a set pressure to cause each of said pistons to move within each of said cylinders, each of said pistons having a maximum stroke in each of said cylinders of about 12 mm, said set pressure being adjustable to at least partially control the amount of force each piston exerts on said punch part.

5. (New) The tool as claimed in claim 4, wherein said press includes at least three cylinders and pistons.

6. (New) The tool as claimed in claim 5, wherein said cylinders are oriented in a linear series on said press.

7. (New) The tool as claimed in claim 4, wherein at least one of said pistons is designed to have a damping motion after contacting said punch part.

8. (New) The tool as claimed in claim 6, wherein at least one of said pistons is designed to have a damping motion after contacting said punch part.

9. (New) The tool as claimed in claim 7, wherein said damping motion exceeds 0.1 mm.

10. (New) The tool as claimed in claim 8, wherein said damping motion exceeds 0.1 mm.

11. (New) The tool as claimed in claim 9, wherein said damping motion is about 1.5 mm.

12. (New) The tool as claimed in claim 10, wherein said damping motion is about 1.5 mm.

13. (New) The tool as claimed in claim 4, wherein at least one of said pistons having a surface area that is designed to at least partially control the amount of force each piston exerts on said punch part.

14. (New) The tool as claimed in claim 12, wherein at least one of said pistons having a surface area that is designed to at least partially control the amount of force each piston exerts on said punch part.

15. (New) A tool for piercing nuts that does not require spacers or shims comprising a punch part and a corresponding die part, a piercing nut feeder incorporated into said punch part, and a press; said punch part including a piercing nut holder; said piercing nut feeder designed to feed a piercing nut into said piercing nut holder; said piercing nut designed to punch a hole into and be attached to a metal sheet that is inserted between said punch part and said die part; said press designed to cause said punch part to be pressed against said die part and to cause said piercing nut to punch a hole into and be attached to a metal sheet that is inserted between said punch part and said corresponding die part, said press including at least one gas spring, said gas spring including a cylinder and a piston that is designed to at least partially move within said cylinder, said piston designed to engage said punch part and to cause said punch part to move toward said die part, said cylinder designed to receive a gas at a set pressure to cause said piston to move within said cylinder, said piston having a maximum stroke in each of said cylinders of about 12 mm, said set pressure being adjustable to at least partially control the amount of force each piston exerts on said punch part, said piston is designed to have a damping motion that exceeds 0.1 mm and up to about 1.5 mm after contacting said punch part.

16. (New) The tool as claimed in claim 15, wherein at least one of said piston having a surface area that is designed to at least partially control the amount of force each piston exerts on said punch part.